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the Pacific across the Cordilleras and Great Salinas to Potosi. Presented by W. Bollaert, Esq., F.R.G.S. Peru: a tracing of a Route from Húanuco to Puerto Prado, with Sections of Elevations, &c., by Messrs. A. Wetherman and J. K. Tucker, 1867. Presented by Don M. F. Paz-Soldan, Honorary Corresponding Member. Map of British Honduras, by J. H. Faber, Esq., Crown Surveyor. Presented by Sir Frederic Rogers, Bart., Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office. A Map of part of Armenia, showing Lake Van, by Major Frederick Millingen; two copies. A Litho-photographic Impression of the Diagram, 'Island of Santorin,' executed by a new system of lithographic printing, with several specimens of other subjects. Presented by Mr. R. Warner, of the Litho-photographic Institute. Map of part of Central Abyssinia, based upon the Surveys and Explorations of various authors, brought up to the present time. Presented by the War Office, through Sir Edward Lugard.

The following papers were read:—

1. *On the Peninsula of Sinai.* By the Rev. F. W. HOLLAND, M.A.,
F.R.G.S.

THE author stated that the experience he had gained during a former visit to Sinai, in 1861, had enabled him to adopt a more independent mode of travelling than is usually followed in that country; and, dispensing with the services of a dragoman, he had now traversed on foot, in two journeys, a very large portion of the peninsula. He commenced his last journey at Suez on the 10th of October last, taking with him four camels laden with provisions for four months, a small tent, and other necessities. His plan was to make the monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai his first point, to establish there his depôt, and make it his head-quarters while he was examining the surrounding country.

Crossing the head of the Gulf of Suez he kept along the coast until, on the third day, he reached the mouth of Wady Ghurundel. Here he stopped to pay a visit to the hot springs of Jebel Hummam Faroun, a mountain which cuts off further progress along the coast. The lower portion of the wady is one of the most fertile in the peninsula, containing a perennial stream, along which are found wild ducks and many kinds of smaller birds. After keeping up Wady Ghurundel for a few miles, he again struck southwards across a limestone plateau behind the Hummam Range, and descended again to the sea by Wady Taiyibeh, continuing thence along the Plain of El Morkha until he reached the mouth of Wady Feiran. Taking the main road to Jebel Musa, which lies up this wady and

Wady Es-Sheikh, Mr. Holland reached the convent on the 19th of October, and, dismissing his Arabs, took up his quarters with the twenty-six Greek monks who live there.

During his stay he occupied a little room at the top of the convent. He was awoke every morning at sunrise, by the clanging of the pieces of iron and wooden boards, used as bells to call the monks to service. Going to the pilgrims' kitchen, where the monks always had wood and water placed for him, he lighted a fire and prepared his breakfast, after which he started on his day's journey of exploration. He found that the monks and their attendants knew little or nothing of the country, and refused all their offers to serve him as guides, depending rather for information of mountain-paths on the Arab ibex-hunters. Leaving the convent he used to let himself down from a little gate in the garden-wall by a rope, and proceeded on his rambles. By the 7th of November he had explored most of the surrounding country within a day's walk of the convent, and began to make more lengthy excursions to distant parts of the peninsula, taking with him an Arab to carry his blanket and bag of provisions, and sleeping out three or four nights in succession. Water he found not nearly so scarce in the granitic district as had been supposed, and there was a far larger amount of vegetation than had usually been described. In his longer excursions he explored Jebel Um Shaumer (which he ascertained to be considerably lower than Jebel Katherine), Jebel Hadeed, Jebel Eth Thebt and the important wadies stretching from it, Senned, Jebel Serbal, Ras Mohammed, the mines of Serabit-el-Kadim, Ain Huthera, Jebel Odjmeh, and many other places of interest in the neighbourhood. On the 3rd of December he witnessed a fearful thunderstorm and flood, whilst encamped in Wady Feiran, near Jebel Serbal. After a little more than an hour's deluging rain, the dry wady was transformed into a foaming torrent, 300 yards broad and from 8 to 10 feet deep, sweeping away many Arabs with their tents and flocks, and hundreds of beautiful palm-trees. With regard to the route followed by the Israelites, the author came to different conclusions, on many points, from those usually received. In the first place, as regards Ain Huthera, identified as Hazeroth, the third station of the Israelites after leaving Mount Sinai, he found its position quite precluded all idea of its being one of the stations, for it lies in a complete *cul-de-sac*. The site of the battle of Rephidim, he showed reasons for fixing in the Wady Es Sheikh, at a spot about 10 miles from Jebel Musa. The Arabs here point out the "Mokad Nebi Mûsa," i. e. "the Seat of the Prophet Moses," at the foot of which the wady cuts through the long ridge of granite which stretches north-

eastward across the centre of the peninsula. Here the Amalekites probably awaited the arrival of the Israelites, and the rock above was the hill on which Moses took his stand. The course of the Israelites, after crossing the Red Sea, he believed to be along the lower road by the coast to Ain Szouweira (*Marah*), thence inland to Ain Howara (*Elim*); afterwards again by the sea near the mouth of Wady Ghurundel. The *Wilderness of Sin* he would identify with the plain of Es Seyh; *Dophkah* he would place near the head of Wady Berah; *Alush* at Wady El Osh, and the route thence to the Rephidim and Mount Sinai up Wady Es Sheikh. One mountain only appeared to the author able to enter into competition with Jebel Mûsa, as Mount Sinai: this was Jebel Um Alowee, "the Mother of Heights." The plain Senned, which lies beneath this mountain and contains an area of nearly thirty square miles, is capable of holding a much larger host than that at the foot of Jebel Mûsa.

In conclusion, the author protested against the theory that the Sinaitic inscriptions were the work of the Children of Israel. He had carefully examined hundreds of them, and had not found one single point in favour of such a theory. The strongest evidence against it is the existence of a bilingual inscription, Greek and Sinaitic. But who the authors of the inscriptions were, remains a matter of doubt. Mr. Holland discovered, however, that they were almost all engraved with stones.

The paper will be printed entire, with map, in the 'Journal,' vol. xxxviii.

The PRESIDENT returned the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Holland, and said that he had heard no paper on subjects of biblical history which had gone so far as the present one to realise the accounts given in Scripture. The paper was not only extremely interesting as a narrative, but had thrown much new light on geographical questions in which we were much interested. He was delighted that there was connected with the Society a gentleman who was such an ornament to the Church, and so good a geographer.

Captain FELIX JONES said that it was upwards of thirty-eight years since he traversed the Peninsula of Sinai; and his journey was undertaken with a view more to the general geographical survey of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Akabah than to the detailed exploration of the peninsula. He traversed that country at a time when Europeans were exposed to great danger in travelling there. He was a companion of the celebrated traveller Welbey, and went over with him the whole of the peninsula. Their sole object was to ascertain the altitude of the principal mountains and certain positions. Those points were fixed trigonometrically and astronomically; but during the last thirty years the original drawings of those surveys had been lost, as had surveys of a more recent date, merely through want of care in the official departments. Of the labours of himself and companion in connexion with Sinai, nothing remained but the reduced charts of the surveys of the Red Sea. It would be highly interesting to have such a survey as that of which Mr. Holland spoke, undertaken

with a view to settle the topography of this very interesting country. He could bear witness to the exactitude of most of what Mr. Holland had stated with respect to the principal geographical features and the mines. Those mines must have been worked at a very remote period; the word which had descended as the name of the place where they were situated meant "a cave," and was no doubt given on account of the operations which were conducted there. Great credit was due to Mr. Holland for the very great pains with which he had investigated the country generally, and for the admirable map he had placed before the meeting.

Mr. CYRIL GRAHAM said he must pay his tribute of admiration to Mr. Holland's enterprise. The results at which he had arrived were due to the indefatigable zeal and industry which had led him to pursue his researches on foot. Mr. Graham would wish to call attention to the Amalekite ruins which had been described as round, and dome-shaped, and to the legend which attributed their erection to the necessity of a refuge against mosquitoes. Connected with this, Mr. Holland had also alluded, with certain discredit, to a tradition which covered the peninsula with trees in ancient days. Now he (Mr. Graham), as a rule, laid the greatest stress upon unwritten tradition, especially in an instance like the present, when it bears no traces of a foreign touch. Trees and mosquitoes naturally go together, and the story of the ruins, too simple to be designed, probably records an important fact in the natural aspect of that country. In all parts of the globe where forests perish, rain ceases or diminishes in quantity, and desiccation, of course, follows. Such a change has occurred, not only in Sinai, but Central Arabia and Asia, and many other regions. As for the *Sinaitic* writings, he (Mr. Graham) considered them now to be tolerably well understood. They belong to one of the many Sinaitic dialects which are to be found perpetuated in cursive characters between the Tigris and the Red Sea. The bilingual inscription is interesting, and should help in the further task of deciphering. The copper mines, as Egyptologists know, were already worked by the sovereigns of the 4th dynasty, long before the time of Abraham. The curious group of stones, called El-'Ojmah, to which Mr. Holland had pointed on the map as a series of rocks hanging in festoons, derived its name from the Semitic word '*ajamah*,' which, in one sense, implied confusion.

Captain FELIX JONES asked whether it did not also mean "a heap."

Mr. CYRIL GRAHAM replied that it did, but that "confusion" was the primary meaning involved. A babbler, or one who talked a foreign tongue, for instance, was called '*ajami*,' a term synonymous with *Berber*, *barbaros*, and the Teutonic *Welsh*. In the above sense—of confusion—he was inclined to think it was applied to the rocks by the Amalekites, or Nabatheans, the latter of whom were, without doubt, the earliest inhabitants of the district of whom we have any knowledge.

Mr. KENNELLY said he would mention a fact connected with the physical geography of the Gulf of Suez, which he had been led to investigate some years ago, when stationed in the Red Sea, and which he believed would tend to support the theory of the author of the Paper that the Israelites had crossed at some place near the head of the Gulf, and that, having crossed, they had for the first days of their journey kept close to the sea shore. It would be noticed that at the base of the high land of Jebel Ataka, there runs for a considerable distance into the Gulf a low cape of the same name. Now from this cape, in a direction of E.N.E. to the opposite shore, between Gad ul Murkub and the wells of Moses, there exists a shallow bank, composed of irregular patches, with a depth of water varying from four to six fathoms. Its length from shore to shore is four miles, and its breadth a little over three-fourths of a mile, while on each side there are corresponding depths of eight and ten fathoms. He was led, therefore, to believe that the

miraculous passage across the sea was effected upon this bank, which by the action of the strong east wind, that was made to blow all the night, in sweeping the waters into the northern end of the Gulf, would be laid bare, and give to the Israelite host a broad and comparatively easy passage to the opposite shore, while on either hand there would remain a depth of water sufficient to constitute a "wall," in the sense in which the same Hebrew word is employed elsewhere in the old Scriptures. It was a known fact that in the present day a similar phenomenon, on a more limited scale, occurs in the Red Sea. After a gale of some continuance up or down the sea, the "Dædalus" reef is seen to be comparatively dry or submerged, according as the gale may be from the north or south.

Sir SAMUEL BAKER said that he could not help thinking, after the reading of the paper, how much better it would be for young men with strong legs and good heads to pass their holiday time in the manner adopted by Mr. Holland, than to occupy it in going to those miserable Alps, and climbing up simply to tumble down again. He believed—and he thought that Sir Roderick Murchison would be inclined to second him in the opinion—that in the Exodus from Egypt Moses, under Providence, owed much of his success to his geographical knowledge. After reading Mr. Holland's paper, he had referred to Josephus, in whose works he found a passage which exactly bore out the belief which the inhabitants of Sinai held at the present day, that there was some mysterious connection with God in the mountain of Sinai. Mr. Holland had mentioned reports like the firing of guns, which of course were naturally caused by the falling of rocks. In the time of which Josephus wrote, the people had the same idea that there was something supernatural connected with that precipitous mountain. Josephus's account was as follows:—

"Now this (Mount Sinai) is the highest of all the mountains thereabouts, and the best for pasturage, the herbage there being good; and it had not been before fed upon, because of the opinion men had that God dwelt there, the shepherds not daring to ascend up to it."

This referred to the time when Moses took Jethro's flocks to the pastures at the base of Sinai. The same superstition pervaded that locality to the present moment. This bore out the remarks which Mr. Graham had made as to the permanence of tradition. He (Sir Samuel Baker) was himself a firm believer in the integrity of Eastern traditions. When Moses became Jethro's son-in-law, and had charge of Jethro's flocks, he wisely led them to Mount Sinai, where the pasturage was good, in consequence of other superstitious shepherds being afraid to go there. Moses, however, lived in this district forty years, during which time he acquired the geographical knowledge of the country which was afterwards most valuable in the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt; he must most probably have known the ford which had been mentioned as the point at which the Red Sea was crossed.

The Rev. Mr. HOLLAND, in reply, said he quite agreed with Mr. Cyril Graham, that in former times there was probably a very large number of trees compared with the present state of the peninsula; but at the same time he would observe that the destruction of the trees would not necessarily alter the general features of the country. He believed that, in its general features, the country was exactly the same as it was at the time of the Israelites. His chief reason for that opinion was that in the sandstone district there were Egyptian tablets of the date of the exodus, which were now in an almost perfect state of preservation. Sandstone was a much softer rock than granite, and he believed that those tablets could not have remained to the present time had the physical features of the country greatly altered. He could not claim the bilingual inscription as a discovery of his own. It had been known for some time, and Mr. Grey copied it. It had also been already published. Mr. Foster knew it, and spoke of it as an "evident superfetation of barbaric Greek."

He passed it over with those long words; but no one could have any doubt that the "barbaric Greek" was done by the same hand as the other inscriptions. The workmanship in both cases exactly corresponded. With regard to the ruins, Mr. Cyril Graham had said that the Nabaioths or the Nabatheans inhabited the country between the time of the Amalekites and the monastic occupation of the country. He (Mr. Holland) firmly believed that the Sinaitic inscriptions were the work of the *Nabatheans*, and that they established a mining or trading colony in the peninsula, making Serbal their centre. The ruins on the top of Serbal were probably those of their temple. As to the crossing of the Israelites over the Red Sea, one gentleman had spoken about "the author's theory;" but he (Mr. Holland) must declare that he had no theory whatever on the subject. He had read an immense number of theories, but he had never been able to get over the plain expression of a "wall of water on each side." He did not believe that any theory which had been raised would explain the formation of that wall of water. He would mention another interesting tradition, which he had heard in the peninsula,—the Arabs believed that the rainfall was regulated by the monks opening the book of Moses; and after the flood to which he had alluded in his paper, the Arabs remarked that the monks had opened the book too wide. They also informed him that they believed that the Pacha of Egypt regulated the rise of the Nile by opening and shutting the Book of Miriam. Probably the connexion of the name of Miriam with this tradition, as to the overflow of the Nile, arose from the fact of Miriam watching over her brother Moses when he was laid in the flags by the river's bank.

Mr. KENNELLY explained that when he spoke of "the author's theory," he merely alluded to his theory of the route of the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea, and not to any theory as to the place or manner of the crossing.

2. *A Visit to the North-East Coast of Labrador, during the Autumn of 1867, in H.M.S. 'Gannet.'* By Commander W. CHIMMO, R.N.

THE object of this voyage was to search for new fishing-grounds on the little-known Labrador coast, and to find harbours of refuge for the Newfoundland fishermen. The *Gannet* sailed from Halifax on July 31, 1867, and passed up the east coast of Nova Scotia to the beautiful harbour of Sydney. Hence, continuing northwards, she began to meet with icebergs on the 4th August, near Wreck Bay, in Newfoundland; the first seen was 80 feet high, perfectly white, except here and there streaks of ultramarine blue. Battle Harbour, on the coast of Labrador, was reached on the 5th. About 300 persons were found here engaged in the fishery; but the ice had been unusually thick this season, and only half-cargoes could be obtained. Passing Petty Harbour, Alexis and Gilbert rivers, the coast was picturesque but bare, and, when the north-wind died away, a mirage arose which distorted the land into most surprising shapes. Occasional Harbour was next visited, and some interesting information obtained about the capelin, a delicious fish peculiar to these latitudes. During succeeding days numerous fishing-vessels and busy people were seen in every cove and harbour; in some harbours